U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Portland Health Care System

VA Portland Health Care System

Telephone Town Hall
April 8, 2020, 12-1 p.m.

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Purpose:

VA Portland leadership and staff will share what is going on in your health care system and how you can still get the care you need; to ensure we answer your questions and address your concerns as we all deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Telephone Town Hall

Agenda

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- **Welcome / Moderator**, Daniel Herrigstad, Public Affairs

- **Director Update** – Darwin Goodspeed

- **Community Care** - Rachel Scarpelli

- **Mental Health** - Robert Tell

- **Primary Care** – Dr. Elizabeth Allen

- **Pharmacy –** Amie Lenzi

- **Infection control** – Sheri Atherton

- **Questions and Answers**

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Community Care Update –
Rachel Scarpelli, Community Care Director

- Many Community providers have limited availability

- Many are only scheduling urgent care or essential care that requires follow-up in the next couple weeks

- Community Care will process these time-sensitive requests

- Care that's being processed as normal:
  - Cancer care
  - Radiation Therapy
  - Diagnostic Mammograms
  - Maternity Care
  - A few other subspecialties

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Community Care Update

- Community providers may use telehealth if you are already established with them (MH can establish initial visit through telehealth)
  - Some services simply cannot be provided virtually

- If you have an upcoming follow-up appointment with a Community provider, and your authorization is valid, you may attend your appointment (Please note, rescheduling is still the **safest** option for nonessential care)

- If you need a new authorization to continue care, we are reviewing those on a case-by-case basis, to ensure continuing care in our current state is appropriate

- At this time, we do not know when we will resume normal operations
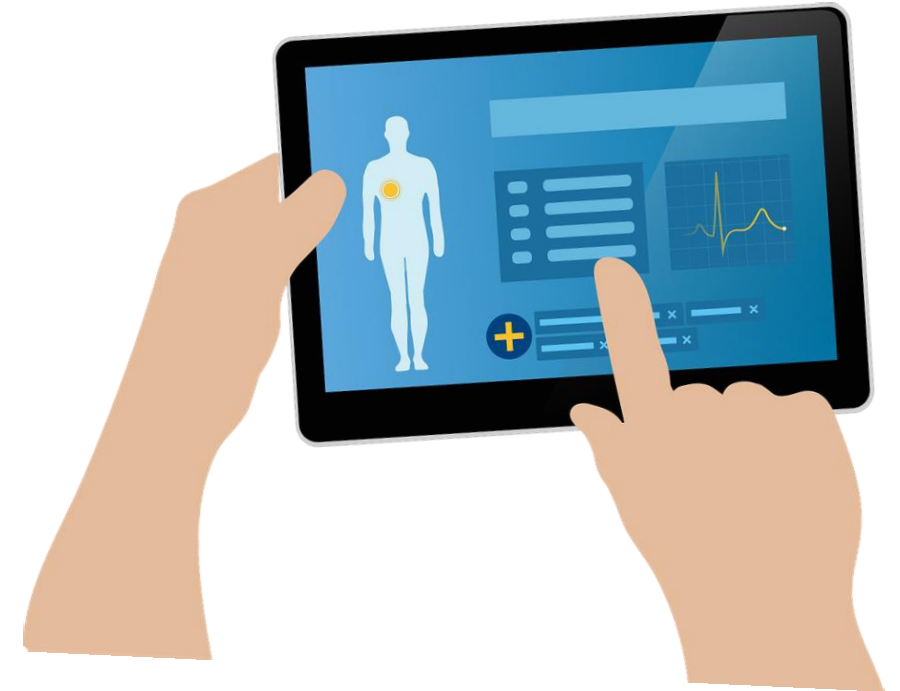
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Community Care Update

- What are we working on right now, during this time?
  - Secondary Authorization Request clean-up

  - Authorizing essential care

  - Calling Veterans to make sure previous care has been completed

  - Scanning medical records into the chart

  - Working with our internal specialties to provide Veterans other options for care, such as video connect and telehealth options

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Telephone or Video Appointments – Veterans can receive care at home — either over the phone or via video using VA Video Connect on their computers, smartphones, or tablets. To set up telephone or video appointments, Veterans can send their provider a secure message on My HealtheVet by visiting myhealth.va.gov.

- Veterans may call VA Portland at 503-220-8262, option 2 to relay a message to their Primary or Specialty Care team or to make change or cancel an appointment.

- To learn more about VA Video Connect, visit mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect. For more details about accessing VAPORHCS Mental Health services, click HERE.

Telephone Town Hall

Pharmacy

Prescription Refills – Veterans can request prescription refills and order and ship medications to their homes using My HealtheVet or the Rx Refill mobile app. Download the app at mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill. Learn more details are on the VAPORHCS Pharmacy web page.

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Pharmacy

VAPORHCS Pharmacy Guidance for Prescription Refill Requests in Response to COVID-19

- All Veterans may request changing their formulary, maintenance medications from 30 day fills to 90 day fills:
  - Call the VISN Call Center at 1-503-220-8262 option 1
  - Use My HealtheVet and choosing "Ask the Pharmacy."
- All patient requests for days' supply changes will be sent to the patient's VA provider.
- VA Pharmacy cannot send patients 90 day fills of controlled substances, supply items and certain high risk medications.
- Pharmacy will not fill more than 90 days' supply of maintenance medications per one time request.
- Patients are always encouraged to use the mail for additional refills of their medications. Veteran's may request prescriptions using Audiocare at 1-888-400-8387 or requesting them through My HealtheVet.

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Pharmacy

Automated Refill Line

- An automated refill line is available for all Portland VAMC patients. Please call one of the following numbers —
- 503-273-5201 (Portland area)
- 1-888-400-8387(from outside the Portland area)
- After you have dialed the number, wait for the automated attendant to answer.
- Enter your entire social security number, then press the # key. Wait for an answer.
- Press 2, then wait for an answer.
- Press 1, then wait for an answer.
- Enter the prescription number, then press the # key. Wait for an answer.
- To refill additional prescriptions, press 1 and repeat the process.
- If you are using the automated refill line, all refills should be ordered at least ten days prior to when the refill is due to insure prompt processing and delivery time.

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Pharmacy

Internet Refill

Prescriptions may also be filled online using VA's My HealtheVet program. You will need a user id and password to log in. If you do not have one, you can easily get one by creating your personal profile.

More information is on the VAPORHCS Pharmacy web page.

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Infection Control

What's coronavirus COVID-19? ([Covid-19 basics CDC link](#))

- The CDC defines COVID-19 as a new type of coronavirus (or "novel coronavirus"). COVID-19 belongs to a large family of viruses that are common in people and different animal species. On rare occasions, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and then spread from person-to-person. This is how COVID-19 started. Typical symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. Symptoms can range from mild to severe.

- To learn more about COVID-19, prevention steps, guidance for high-risk groups, travelers, and more, [visit the CDC](#).

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Infection Control

What should I do if I have symptoms?

- If you have a fever, coughing, and shortness of breath, call your VA medical center before going to a clinic, urgent care, or emergency room. You can also [send your doctor a secure message](#) through My HealtheVet.

- Contacting us first helps us protect you, medical staff, and other patients.
  Use [MyHealtheVet](#) or call VA Portland at 503-220-8262, option 2 to relay a message to your Primary or Specialty Care team or to make change or cancel an appointment.

- [Visit the CDC](#) to learn more about the symptoms of COVID-19.

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Infection Control

What's VA doing to deal with COVID-19?

- We have activated VA's emergency management coordination cell (EMCC), and have started clinical screenings at all VA facilities. [Learn about VA's public health response](#)

Can I be tested for COVID-19?

- Testing is based on many factors, including the severity of symptoms, other existing illnesses or conditions, possible exposure, and other criteria. VA health facilities have been testing Veterans who meet the [testing criteria provided by the CDC](#).

I don't have symptoms, but I feel anxious and overwhelmed. What can I do?

- Concerns about COVID-19 can be stressful for many people, and it's understandable to feel anxious. It's important to take steps to manage stress and take care of yourself.

- **Stay connected and healthy.** Stay in touch with friends and family by phone and social media, and get enough sleep and exercise. Visit the CDC to learn about managing stress and anxiety about COVID-19.

- **Get more tips.** The National Center for PTSD has created a guide for managing stress associated with COVID-19.

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Questions and Answers